

Rollout Tasers says Tyler's mum

Police | Julia Irwin

POLICE reform campaigner Shani Cassidy said she welcomed the testing of Tasers in Bendigo and Morwell but believes the program should be rolled out across the state.

"Why just Morwell and Bendigo? Why not the whole state, particularly with the drinking and knife problems on our streets at the moment," Ms Cassidy said.

Ms Cassidy, pictured, has been campaigning for Tasers since her son Tyler, 15, carrying two kitchen knives, was shot dead by

police after a short confrontation at the Northcote skate park on December 11, 2008.

"I have no doubt Tyler's death could have been avoided if police had been issued with Tasers, but they need to be issued to the entire force, and quickly to avoid another death," she said.

Late last month Chief Commissioner, Simon Overland, who had previously opposed the roll-out of Taser stun guns, said



general-duties officers in the Bendigo and Morwell would get the weapons in July for the 12-month-pilot program.

"It's sad it takes the killing of a 15-year-old child to finally get an alternative to a gun," Ms Cassidy said.

"Police training needs to be very thorough and managed correctly, so that use of Tasers are not abused by police officers."

She said she would continue her campaign for independent investigations of police killings, better treatment of families in her situation, and that no new guns be issued to police.

Meanwhile, Ms Cassidy and her family were dealing with preparations for the inquest into Tyler's death.

Last week State Coroner Jennifer Coate ruled Victorian Legal Aid and the Human Rights Law Resource Centre could appear at the inquest but denied Youthlaw's request.

Ms Cassidy said it was disappointing Youthlaw could not appear on the grounds it was a duplication, particularly since Tyler was a child and the organisation was a specialist young people's community legal centre.

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